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QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING
OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS
ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS
OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED
NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 23 October 1991 from the representatives of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith a document entitled "Shaping the peace: The United Nations in the 1990s", containing proposals by the five Nordic Governments for further consideration within the United Nations (see annex).

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 74 and 123, and of the Security Council.

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ANNEX

Shaping the peace: The United Nations in the 1990s

The end of the Cold War has provided an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen the United Nations. In the new international climate of cooperation, the Security Council has begun to fulfil more effectively its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The necessary political conditions now seem to prevail for the United Nations to be able truly to live up to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Lasting peace and security can best be achieved when the necessary economic, social and environmental conditions are in place, as well as when democracy and respect for human rights are at hand everywhere. The Nordic countries have presented their views on peace-building in many different bodies of the United Nations.

In the following, the Nordic countries will focus on certain aspects of the role of the United Nations in peace-making and peace-keeping. The proposals offered below may be viewed in the light of the 1983 Nordic report on the strengthening of the United Nations (A/38/271-S/15830, annex) and subsequent Nordic submissions, particularly in the Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations.

It is the responsibility of Member States to use fully the existing United Nations machinery for peace-making and peace-keeping and, when necessary, to adapt it to ensure effective support to the Security Council and the Secretary-General in carrying out their respective tasks.

Recent experience has demonstrated the crucial role of the United Nations in the settlement of regional conflicts and in international action of enforcement. This experience may also provide useful guidance on how to shape the United Nations into an even more effective tool for the maintenance of international peace and security, not least in the area of conflict prevention.

The time should now be ripe to transform some of the recurrent ideas in the international debate into concrete proposals on possible elements of an integrated United Nations approach to peace-making, peace-keeping and, as a last resort, enforcement action.

In the opinion of the Nordic Governments, the following proposals merit further elaboration with a view to their prompt realization:

(a) The Security Council should consider initiating anticipatory discussions of potential conflicts and preventive measures;

(b) The Secretary-General should be provided with the necessary resources to support his role in bringing situations threatening international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council, under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations. This would, inter alia, entail enhanced Secretariat capabilities to collect and analyse data and to monitor conflicts, increased use of the existing field organization, as well as better information-sharing by Member States, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council;

(c) A system for registration and monitoring of international arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations should be created as soon as possible. Major recipient and supplier countries, including the permanent members of the Security Council, should participate in such a system from the outset;

(d) A practice should be established for the Security Council or the Secretary-General to send fact-finding missions to areas of potential conflict as a matter of routine, in accordance with the principles laid down in the draft Declaration on Fact-finding by the United Nations in the Field of the Maintenance of International Peace and Security;

(e) Parties to a conflict should use more frequently the International Court of Justice for settling their disputes. Member States should be urged to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court. Increased use should be made of the possibility to request the advisory opinion of the Court on legal issues in order to prevent or defuse conflicts;

(f) The United Nations should be provided with an enhanced capability to respond, in accordance with agreed criteria and procedures, to requests by Member States for electoral assistance in order to facilitate peaceful transition to democracy;

(g) Political support and adequate resources should be given to the Secretary-General to enable him, in cooperation with the Security Council, to engage effectively in negotiation, mediation, the use of good offices and other forms of peace-making and preventive diplomacy;

(h) The early launching of United Nations peace-keeping operations as a deterrent to potential armed conflicts should be considered;

(i) Action should be taken to ensure adequate financing for United Nations peace-keeping operations, based on the principle of collective responsibility. Arrangements should be made for the start-up phase of new operations, for example, through the establishment of a special peace-keeping start-up fund. Ongoing efforts to streamline and make the present system of peace-keeping operations more efficient and cost-effective should be encouraged;

(j) The capacity of the United Nations system to mount combined operations of peace-making and humanitarian assistance should be strengthened. Furthermore, the readiness should be increased to consider, on a case-by-case basis and with due regard to the Charter, the launching on humanitarian grounds of actions to rectify gross violations of human rights;

(k) The Security Council should consider with determination the use of warnings and sanctions against parties that are patently unwilling to solve peacefully conflicts that threaten international peace and security. In order to improve its readiness to act in this respect, the Security Council should consider initiating a study on the effectiveness of different types of sanctions. In this context, ways and means of compensating third countries that find themselves confronted with special economic problems as a result of such sanctions should be studied;

(l) The modalities of undertaking enforcement actions as a last resort, including the employment of military force, should be clarified. The organizational set-up for military operations, the chain of command and mechanisms for coordination between Member States, including the role of the Military Staff Committee, should be examined closely.